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ABSTRACT

This report provides concerned citizens and educators with information about the attainment of educational objectives in the United States. Exercises concerning citizenship and its responsibilities were administered to randomly selected 9, 13, and 17-year-olds, and young adults (26 to 35). This document reports study highlights and seeks to show how widely particular citizenship knowledge and attitudes are held at each of these four age levels. A related document is EA 003 035. (Author/LLR)

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NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS

A Project of the Education Commission of the States

SUMMARY OF REPORT 2

CITIZENSHIP: NATIONAL RESULTS - PARTIAL

July, 1970

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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EA 003 034

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS

A Project of the Education Commission of the States

Tom McCall, Governor of Oregon, Chairman, Education Commission of the States
Wendell H. Pierce, Executive Director, Education Commission of the States
James A. Hazlett, Administrative Director, National Assessment

Assessment Reports

#1	Science: National Results	July, 1970
#2	Citizenship: National Results -- Partial	July, 1970

In addition to the detailed reports of National Assessment, brief summaries of the results and commentaries by a panel of reviewers and also being printed.

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This summary was prepared to give readers an overview of the first results of the National Assessment in the field of Citizenship, which are reported in detail in National Assessment Report #2. National Assessment is also printing a booklet of "Commentaries by a Panel of Reviewers" which is a collection of critiques by an independent group of citizens who have reviewed the partial results of the Citizenship assessment. This summary has been prepared by Clifford L. Dochterman, Director of Public Information, Education Commission of the States.

SUMMARY - - REPORT 2

CITIZENSHIP: NATIONAL RESULTS - - PARTIAL

Background

The kind and quality of citizenship education in the nation's schools and what it means to the people of the United States is of paramount importance to the national welfare.

National Assessment, a census of educational attainment, intended to help measure the "gross educational product", has a number of preliminary and partial findings in the area of Citizenship. A complete report on Citizenship will be available at a later date. National Assessment reports will provide educators and concerned citizens with dependable information about how well the country is attaining specified educational objectives, the progress being made and the problems still to be overcome.

Unlike standardized achievement tests which produce scores mainly to show differences among individuals, National Assessment is geared to measure and report the percentage of persons who demonstrate certain achievements, knowledge, skills and attitudes. The Citizenship Report, for example, shows that 11 per cent of Adults belong to organizations which take action of one kind or another against unequal opportunities, but does not report "scores" for citizenship as a whole, either for individuals or groups.

Four age levels, 9, 13 and 17 and young adults (26 through 35 years old) were included in the 1969-1970 Citizenship assessment.* The 9 and 13-year-olds, and most 17-year-olds, were assessed in 2,500 participating schools. Out-of-school 17's and Adults were interviewed individually in their homes. The number of respondents at each age (total for all ages was approximately 100,000 persons) was chosen to insure adequate representation of the diversity of the nation.

The "exercises" used in the Citizenship assessment were varied in nature and approach. All, however, were designed to avoid unnecessary difficulties to test the respondent's knowledge and reactions as simply and directly as possible. Questions were often asked in individual interviews. Groups were asked to join in solving problems. When questions were put in written form, the respondent also heard the questions read to him from a tape recorder, thus, reducing dependence on reading skills. Answers were kept to a word or two, or to the checking of one of five alternatives.

National Assessment seeks to show how widely particular Citizenship knowledge and attitudes are held at each of four age levels. For example, 19 per cent of all 17-year-olds assessed can cite at least one example of religious discrimination in the United States demonstrates an awareness of one's country and concern for other individuals.

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* The nine other areas included in National Assessment are Science (See 1970 summary or complete report), Writing, Literature, Mathematics, Reading, Music, Art, Social Studies, and Career and Occupational Development.

What are important citizenship objectives? What does the nation, expect persons of different ages to do, to understand and to value? No consideration was given as to whether homes, schools, or other institutions have contributed most to present levels of achievement. Nor was any examination made of current curricula in the area of Citizenship. Importance to society, as agreed upon by schools, scholars and laymen, was the basis for developing objectives.

For reporting purposes, nine categories closely related to the final objectives, were selected. Only the three underlined are being reported at this time; the remaining six will be reported at a later date:

A. Show Concern for the Well-Being of Others.

B. Support Rights and Freedoms of All Individuals.

C. Recognize the Value of Just Law.

D. Know the Main Structure and Functions of Our Government.

E. Participate in Effective Civic Action.

F. Understand Problems of International Relations.

G. Approach Civic Decisions Rationally.

H. Take Responsibility for Own Development.

I. Help and Respect Their Own Families.

HIGHLIGHTS OF 9 AND 13-YEAR-OLD ASSESSMENT

Attitudes and knowledge of the two younger age groups were compared by their responses on identical exercises.

Concern for the well-being of others can be shown in several ways: being aware of conditions of need, knowing ways to help, being willing to help and actually giving appropriate help and support.

Nearly everyone has an opportunity at one time or another to demonstrate concern by helping friends when they need help. Over half (53%) of the 13-year-olds reported that they had helped a friend within the month, and 82% reported having done so within the past year. The 9-year-olds reported being somewhat less helpful to friends, the corresponding percentages being 32% (within a month) and 59% (within the year). If these figures are at all similar to what the 13-year-olds would have reported 4 years earlier, then considerable progress was made during the period of growth and added maturity.

Approximately half (57%) of the 9-year-olds and 80% of the 13-year-olds signified that they would be willing to continue to associate with a companion whose father was jailed for stealing. Most of the young people willing to continue the association took the position that a child is in no way responsible for his father's actions so it does not help to reject a friend whose father acted wrongly; thus, at least verbally supporting the principle of judging individuals by their own behavior.

The 9 and 13-year-olds were asked questions about the main structure and functions of government. A high percentage (83% at age 9, and 95% at age 13) knew that governors are elected. Knowing that a governor is elected does not necessarily indicate knowing who elects him; 59% of the 9's and 84% of the 13's could state in their own words that "the people" elect the governor.

Ninety-one per cent of the 9 year group and 94% of the 13's named the President of the United States. (98% for 17-year-olds and young adults.)

Interview exercises provided an opportunity for 9 and 13-year-olds to report on effective participation in civic action. When asked whether they had ever taken part in some organized civic project to help other people or to make the world a nicer place (e.g. collected food or clothing for others; planted trees; cleaned a neighborhood park; or participated in other town, school, church or club community service project), 63% of both 9's and 13's reported they had done so in the past year. Fifty-five per cent of the 9's and 70% of the 13's reported participating in two or more civic projects in the past.

A group observation exercise was conducted with 9-year-olds to observe behavior which required interaction and cooperation among students in order to complete a task successfully. Trained observers recorded selected actions. For 9-year-olds the task was for four-member teams to ask questions to identify a hidden prize. All team members had to agree on the questions to be asked, so cooperation and organization were essential.

This exercise in small group cooperation demonstrated that: 97% of the 9-year-olds suggested a new question to ask; 79% gave a reason for their viewpoint; 75% sought information related to the game; and 75% helped organize or change the procedure.

HIGHLIGHTS OF 13 AND 17-YEAR-OLD AND ADULT COMPARISONS

Several questions related to discrimination and unjust treatment were designed to assess attitudes and actions which demonstrate a concern for others. One exercise described a hypothetical case of children of a minority group being excluded from a park, and the respondent is asked whether he would feel he should do something about the matter if he saw it happen. The majority (82% of 13's and 91% of 17's and 79% of Adults) felt they should do something about the observed discrimination in the park. Why the 9% rise from the 13's to 17's? Why the 12% fall from 17's to Adults?

More than 80% of all of each age (80% of 13's, 92% of 17's and 82% of Adults) could name at least one acceptable way to help if they wanted to (e.g. report to park authority, tell person it was wrong, report to police, contact civil liberties group, etc.)

The 13 year age group was compared with the older groups in their knowledge of the structure and operation of government. Most 13's (70%) and nearly all of the 17's and Adults (91% and 92%) could identify the Senate being part of Congress. Seventy-one per cent of 13-year-olds could give acceptable reasons why we have a government compared to 92% of the 17's (also 48% of the 9-year-olds.) The 13's (82%) were close to 17's (93%) and Adults (86%) when asked why it is good that we usually have at least 2 candidates for an election (i.e. "so people can make a choice"). The 13-year-old group was not far behind the 17's and Adults in evaluating the reasons for legislators voting in accordance with the wishes of their constituents (13's - 72%, 17's - 83%, Adults - 81%).

Knowledge of the names of current office holders tends to measure an individual's awareness and information about the operations of and happenings in the government. Nearly everyone knew the President's name and most knew the name of the Vice President. As the following data indicates, fewer could name other major federal officials or representatives:

	13	17	Adult
President (Nixon)	94%	98%	98%
Vice President (Agnew)	60%	79%	87%
Secretary of State (Rogers)	2%	9%	16%
Secretary of Defense (Laird)	6%	16%	24%
Speaker of the House (McCormack)	2%	25%	32%
Senate Majority Leader (Mansfield)	4%	14%	23%
At least one Senator from own state	16%	44%	57%
Both Senators from own state	6%	18%	31%
Congressman from own district	11%	35%	39%

The above figures demonstrate rather clearly that an awareness of the name of current political leadership increases with age.

Over two-thirds (69%) of the 13's could name the 2 major political parties in the United States. This was accomplished by nearly all the 17's (90%) and Adults (95 %). Substantially fewer could name a third political party (13's - 11%, 17's - 42%, Adults - 53%). More than twice as many Adults (78%) as 13-year-olds (34%) could name the political party of the Governor of their own state.

Respondents at ages 13 and Adult were asked to name local interest groups who might support or oppose some hypothetical community activity. At age 13, 61%

could name at least 2 local groups who might help start a youth club. In the adult sample, 60% could name at least one group who might support, and at least one group who might oppose, someone who wanted to tear down his house and put up an apartment house in its place. These exercises were intended to demonstrate the knowledge of the individual to the workings of his government, limitations of governmental authority, and an awareness of the resources of the community in which he lives.

The report does not and cannot match what people say they are willing to do and what they would do in an actual situation, but willingness to associate without prejudice is seen as a civic goal in itself and one that tends to encourage fair policies and practices. Asked if they knew any place in the world where people were treated unfairly because of their race, 75 per cent of the 13-year-olds answered in the affirmative and 45 per cent could cite actual examples, (i.e. denial of rights, physical mistreatment, deprecating jokes, unequal opportunities, etc.) When asked the same question about the U. S. the corresponding percentages were 66 and 45 per cent.

When religion was substituted for race the majority of all three groups were aware of discrimination in the world with the amount of awareness increasing slightly with age, but fewer could cite examples of discrimination (30% at age 13, 38% for the 17's, and 59% for the Adults). Examples of religious discrimination in the United States were cited by 13% of 13's, 19% of 17's and 30% of Adults.

An exercise was designed to reveal the willingness of individuals to associate with persons of other races. Five business and living situations were suggested and

respondents were asked if they were willing to have a person of another race assume certain relationships to themselves. The following results were reported:

Willing for a Person of Another Race to:	Per cent Willing 13's	17's	Adults
Be your dentist or doctor	81%	74%	75%
Live next door	83%	77%	67%
Represent you in elected office	81%	82%	82%
Sit at next table in restaurant	80%	90%	88%
Stay in same hotel or motel	88%	92%	89%

More than three-fourths of all ages claimed willingness to accept other races in at least four of the five situations. Between 74% and 92% of all age groups said they would accept persons of different races in each situation, except for the Adult group where 67% said they would be willing to have persons of different races live next door.

Substantial majorities in all age groups knew ways to help others meet specific needs. This is not to say they would actually do so. They knew how to report a fire, where to report a non-functioning traffic light, where to report a public health menace such as uncollected garbage in the street, how to get a baby sitter, how to get a dog license, how to report an unfair business practice. Not all knew how to assist in all categories, but a large number could help in three or even four categories. The adults, as might be expected, scored highest. Examples: 95 per cent knew how to report a health menace or fire and 88 per cent knew how to report an unfair business practice.

Many knew at all four ages that the President does not have the right to do anything affecting the United States that he wants to (9's - 49%, 13's - 73%, 17's - 78%, Adults - 89%), but the percentages varied widely by age when the four groups were asked to cite one acceptable reason why the President's power is limited. Only 18 per cent of the 9-year-olds could provide a reason as compared with 53 per cent of the 13's, 68 per cent of the 17's and 80 per cent of the Adults.

The majority (61%) of 13's were able to give at least one reason why they might write to elected officials, or to people who make our laws.

Willingness to express one's views publicly or to disagree publicly with another whose views are contrary to one's own was measured in observed group discussions on selected topics. About half (42% of the 13's and 56% of the 17's) were willing at the outset to express their opinions on the given topic. While 17's volunteered more initial opinions, far more 13 year olds volunteered at least one contrary opinion. When the students were asked to give a contrary opinion to the one given by a student speaker, 63% of the 13's and 31% of the 17's were ready with an opposite opinion.*

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* Although the issues discussed and the viewpoints expressed in the above mentioned exercises did not constitute measures of citizenship they are revealing and interesting as concerns of young people. For example, of those who expressed initial opinions 52% of the 13's and 41% of the 17's who gave opinions thought schools should have rules about clothes, 54% of the 13's and 53% of the 17's thought police should not be permitted to tap telephones, 42% of the 13's and 57% of the 17's opposed the death penalty for murder, 86% of the 13's and 77% of the 17's were in favor of teachers giving letter grades instead of merely marking cards passing or not passing, 68% of the 13's and 55% of the 17's felt records should be kept of guns.

In response to the question: "Suppose our country made a mistake. Should they tell about the mistake? Or should they keep it secret so they won't look silly" both age groups felt strongly (67% of the 13's and 76% of the 17's) that the government should own up. Both groups veered sharply when asked "If someone gets sick, should his doctor and hospital bills be paid by the government?" Fifty-one per cent of the 13's said no as did 44% of the 17's.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 17 HEAR OLD AND ADULT ASSESSMENTS

Several significant exercises provided specific data on the 17-year-olds and young adults. At these ages we can compare knowledge about the form of local government in the respondent's own community. A higher percentage of adults living in a town or city than 17 year olds knew whether their community had a city (or town) council (87% vs 71%). Only 44% of the 17-year-olds were aware that their city did or did not have a city manager as compared to 62% of the Adults. The differences disappeared for knowing whether the city had a mayor (adults - 86%, age 17 - 85%).

Less than half (46%) of the adults, and just 50% of the 17's could recognize the condition (i.e. when a state has a small population) in which a state might have more federal senators than representatives.

Several exercises were concerned with a citizen's participation in civic action. A majority of the 17-year-olds(79%) and adults (86%) could cite one or more ways in which U. S. citizens can influence the actions of their federal government. But when asked if they think they can influence decisions of their state government

only a little more than half said yes (age 17 - 52%, adults - 61%). The difference in the exercise formats may have influenced the answer. The use of the term "you" instead of "citizen" in the state exercise may have elicited a truer reflection of involvement. National Assessment results showed that 27% of Adults have communicated with a government official about a civic issue, 12% have written to a newspaper editor and 31% have spoken in a public meeting to defend someone or some idea.

The involvement of individuals in organized political action was explored in the 17 and adult assessment. Twenty-six percent of the Adults reported campaigning at least once for a political candidate. A higher percentage (47%) of 17's reported campaign participation; but this comparison with Adults should not be misinterpreted, because the 17's were credited for campaigning for fellow students in school and club elections. Almost half (46%) of the 17's belong to at least one club or organization outside of school, although it is not specifically known how many of these organizations had a civic function. A quarter (25%) of the adults indicated that they belonged to at least one club or organization for community improvement.

A CONCLUDING OBSERVATION

Those interested in a detailed analysis of National Assessment partial results in citizenship should consult the complete report available from the Education Commission of the States, 822 Lincoln Tower, 1860 Lincoln Street, Denver, Colorado 80203, or NAEP, Room 201A Huron Towers, 2222 Fuller Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48105. Supplementary reports will be available in a few months to provide complete data and a variety of comparisons among groups.

National Assessment is the first nationwide effort to provide concerned citizens and educators with dependable information about how we, in the United States, are attaining agreed upon educational objectives. As areas are assessed again, educational progress -- or its absence -- will be revealed and educational problems which require continuing attention may be identified. It is hoped that National Assessment reports will provide valuable indices of American educational results which will be useful in making educational decisions.